

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 KHARTO 00020 051345Z

44

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 051320Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 879

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL ASMARA

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 0020

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ET, SU

SUBJECT: NIMEIRI COMMENTS RE STATUS MEDIATION ERITREAN PROBLEM

REF: KHARTOUM 2796

1. IN COURSE MY DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT JANUARY 4 REGARDING STATUS OF HOSTAGES STILL HELD BY ERITREANS, I COMMENTED PERSONALLY BEST WAY OF ERITREANS TO AVOID FURTHER BLOODSHED WOULD APPEAR TO BE TO PURSUE NIMEIRI'S MEDIATION OFFER MORE ACTIVELY. PRESIDENT RESPONDED THAT ERITREANS HAD IN FACT ALREADY DONE SO. HE THEN REVEALED THAT DURING MID-OCTOBER VISIT HERE OF ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WODAJO (KHARTOUM 2563) A DATE AND PLACE FOR SECRET BILATERAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE ERITREANS AND EPMG HAD BEEN AGREED UPON. UNFORTUNATELY NOTHING FURTHER HAD BEEN HEARD FROM ETHIOPIAN SIDE SINCE WODAJO'S RETURN ADDIS. NIMEIRI THEN EMBARKED ON LENGTHY DISQUISITION OF PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN SEEKING TO DEAL WITH DIRG AND NOTED THAT DIFFICULTIES WITHIN ETHIOPIAN LEADERSHIP HAD REPORTEDLY INTENSIFIED IN LAST TWO MONTHS. I REMINDED NIMEIRI THAT WE SUPPORTED HIS INITIATIVE AND HOPED PROGRESS COULD BE MADE ON THIS ISSUE.

2. COMMENT. FOREGOING TENDS TO CONFIRM IMPRESSION CREATED AT TIME WODAJO'S VISIT THAT EPMG MORE INTERESTED IN CREATING PUBLIC IMPRESSION OF FLEXIBILITY THAN IN ACTUALLY UNDERTAKING SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WITH ERITREANS.

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ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR HERE HAS REPEATEDLY STRESSED TO ME

THAT "BALL IS IN SUDANESE COURT" AND THAT ADDIS IS "WAITING
TO HEAR" FROM KHARTOUM. PROBLEM THUS APPEARS LIKELY TO REMAIN
ON DEAD CENTER PENDING DEVELOPMENTS IN ADDIS OR, CONCEIVABLY,
ON GROUND IN ERITREA.
BREWER

SECRET

NNN

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